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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3279
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 6706
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 4446
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 3061
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 7597
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1666
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 5000
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 1210
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA//
INFO RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 7335

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 000341

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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/R/MR:STHIBEAULT AND
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, AZAIBACK, AND
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA MDAVIDSON
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC
CENTCOM FOR CCPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Syria/Macedonia, Pelosi's Visit, Prisoner-swap, Iraq,
Lebanon, Iran (4/10)

¶1. Summary: Syrian papers on Apr. 10 reported FM Mouallem's meeting on Apr. 9 with Macedonian FM Antonio Milososki. Talks focused on the latest developments in the Middle East and the Balkans and prospects of bilateral cooperation. During the meeting, FM Milososki expressed his country's desire to establish diplomatic relations between Macedonia and Syria "to boost communications between the two countries and peoples." Minister Mouallem also expressed Syria's interest in enhancing ties with Macedonia in the interest of both countries. "My visit to Syria aims at expanding economic and political cooperation between Syria and Macedonia," Mr. Milososki said in a press statement after the meeting. "The meeting was very productive; my country has the desire to exchange viewpoints with Syria on the latest developments in the Middle East and the Balkans," he added.

On the Lebanese issue, papers quoted a Jordanian daily as saying that a third group of Samir Geagea's and Walid Jumblatt's militia is receiving military training in Israel. Papers also exposed the failure of an Israeli attempt on the life of Hizbollah leader Hasan Nasrallah.

End of summary.

¶2. Selected Headlines:

"FM Mouallem reviews the latest developments in the Middle East and Syrian-Macedonian relations with Macedonian FM Antonio Milososki" Government-owned Tishreen, 4/10)

"A US study Center: All attempts to isolate Syria have the opposite result" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 4/10)

"Anti-occupation demonstrations sweep Iraq on the anniversary of the fall of Baghdad. Americans sustain more losses" (Government-owned Tishreen, 4/10)

"Iraqi refugees: Syria has supported us" (Government-owned Tishreen, 4/10)

"Swap of Palestinian prisoners collides with Olmert's procrastination. Families of prisoners look forward to finalizing

the deal" (Government-owned Tishreen, 4/10)

"Jordanian daily: Militias of Geagea and Jumblatt receive military training in Israel" (Government-owned Tishreen, 4/10)

"Militias of the governing team in Lebanon continue criminal assaults against nationalist figures. The opposition warns against using Lebanon as a US bargaining card" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 4/10)

"An attempt on the life of Hizbollah leader Nasrallah has been foiled" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 4/10)

"Iran is the tenth state to enrich nuclear fuel. Time has come to conclude an understanding on Iran's nuclear program. Withdrawal from the NPT is possible if escalation against Iran continues" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 4/10)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

"Damascus, the Route to Peace"

Ahmad Suwwan, a commentator in government-owned Tishrin, wrote (4/10): "US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Syria was part of the American popular and political pressure on President Bush's administration to drive it to give the logic of reason, wisdom, and objectivity precedence over the policy of instability, wars, and sedition...."

"The policy of isolation, siege, and accusations against Syria has resulted only in the isolation of the United States and the intensification of hatred for its adventurous and foolish policy...."

"Syria adopts just peace as a strategic option and supports the unity and sovereignty of Iraq, the Palestinian people's rights, the unity of the Lebanese people, and the restoration of all occupied Arab territories. This is the real reason why the Bush administration adopts hostile positions toward Syria...."

"Double Loss"

Muhammad Khayr al-Jammali, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawrah, wrote (4/10): "President Bush's new strategy in Iraq, 100 days after the start of its implementation, has failed to achieve any of its objectives...."

"The security situation is deteriorating in Iraq, US human losses are increasing, and the dispute between the Democrats and the administration is continuing...."

"Bush is losing both on the domestic and Iraqi fronts.... Pelosi's visit to Syria and her call for dialogue with Damascus sends a strong message to Bush and his team that dialogue, not the policy of wars, arrogance, and aggression against nations and their cultures, is the way to maintain world peace and guarantee that every country will have stable interests in the Middle East, the world's most sensitive and most strategic region...."

"Our Prisoners and Theirs"

Dr. Buthaynah Sha'ban, Minister of Expatriate Affairs, commented in government-owned Tishrin (4/10): "While everyone in the West is talking about the captured Israeli soldier in Gaza, no one is talking about 11,000 Arab prisoners in Israeli jails and thousands

others in public and secret American prisons....

"While Iran treated the British soldiers with respect, countries that call themselves civilized treat Arab prisoners in a brutal way that has no connection whatsoever with civilization....

"The Iranian treatment of the female British soldier was humane, entailing respect for her as a woman and a mother, unlike the American forces' treatment of Iraqi women, who are today writing about their suffering from rape, humiliation, and imprisonment, not to mention the suffering of female prisoners in Israeli jails....

"There must be collective Arab national action to highlight the tragedy of Arab prisoners and secure their release...."

"Who Does Justice to Prisoners?"

Umar Jaftali, a commentator in government-owned Tishrin, said (4/10): "Israel is hindering efforts to swap prisoners with the Palestinians through its incursions and terrorist practices in the Palestinian territories. Not only do these practices obstruct the exchange of prisoners, but they also prevent the achievement of peace....

"Israel is detaining Palestinian ministers and parliamentarians without any legal justification, and the failure to release them will remain a violation of international law and justice.... Israel is talking about its captured soldier as if he were the most crucial issue, and Western countries are colluding with it and forgetting that the entire Palestinian people are being held captive...."

Corbin